

## SOME INTERESTING IMAGES OF PĀRŚVANĀTHA

Klaus Bruhn has published an interesting typical image of Pārśvanātha, from Temple no. 6, Devgaḍh, in his *The Jina Images of Deogarh*, fig. 260. He writes: «The Jina-images at Deogarh and in its neighbourhood are on the whole in close conformity with the artistic conventions. There are however a few exceptions and these are particularly noteworthy on account of the fact that they all concern Pārśva-images ... the iconography of Pārśva's attendant figures sometimes deviates from the normal formula (§ 78 etc.) ... the treatment of snake(s) varies considerably (cf. figs. 238 and 243). To this may be added a few isolated instances. Thus Temple no. 6 houses a Pārśva image ... here the standing Jina in the centre is flanked by two theriomorphous snakes, each with three heads (fig. 260). The hood-circle of the Jina is missing but there can hardly be any doubt that the Jina represented is Pārśva»<sup>1</sup>.

This image is indeed a rare type, but the photograph published clearly shows a part of a circular halo behind the head of this nude figure standing in the *kāyotsarga* posture (see Figure 1). Usually when Pārśva is shown with a hood-circle, representation of the halo is avoided. The *kāyotsarga mudrā* certainly shows that this is a figure of a Jina or one who is a siddha. Can it be that some person other than Pārśva was intended here? In no other known sculpture or Pārśva are the snakes represented like this on two sides of the feet. However, a

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1. BRUHN, KLAUS, *The Jina Images of Deogarh* (Leiden, 1969), p. 198.

similar treatment is seen in a bronze figure of Bāhubali being worshipped in a Jaina temple at Venkundram, in North Arcot district, Tamil Nadu (Figure 2, second image from left). Of course these bronzes are of a date later than the Devagadh sculpture under consideration, but the Bāhubali bronze does represent an older tradition. In the relief panel of Bāhubali in the Cave no. 4 (Jaina cave) at Badami (Figure 3) we find snake-heads rising up near the feet of Bāhubali <sup>2</sup>. Also we find similar snakes near the feet of Bahubali in the relief panel of Bāhubali at Aihole (Figure 4) <sup>3</sup>. Both the Badami and Aihole panels date from c. early seventh century A.D. Also compare the rock-cut Figure of Bāhubali at Ratnagiri, Anantapur district (Figure 5). Near the legs of the famous colossal figure of Bāhubali at Karkal in south Karnataka the snake-heads are shown rising up from a number of ant-hills (*valmika*) <sup>4</sup>. On the sides of the feet of Gommateśvara colossus at Śravaṇa Belgola (tenth cent.) we also see snakes rising up near the feet of Bāhubali <sup>5</sup>. In all these sculptures (except Figure 5) and in the Venkundram bronze creepers entwining the legs are also carved. If we compare the Venkundram bronze of Bāhubali with the Devgadh sculpture under consideration we are tempted to suspect that the Devgadh sculpture might have been left half-finished and that the artist missed the carving of creepers entwining the legs of the figure at Devgadh, Temple no. 6. In that case this Devgadh sculpture was perhaps intended to represent Bāhubali but artist did not or could not finish it. Nothing definite can however be said in this case.

Klaus Bruhn further writes: «Another curious Pārśva-image (obviously later than the one just mentioned) belongs to Wall-Section V. Here the rendering of the Jina is conventional (sevenfold hood-circle), but the cinha (depicted on the throne-blanket) is a bird. The cinha prescribed for Pārśva is a theriomorphous snake. As this is not required for purposes of identification it is generally not depicted ... As the bird cinha is only prescribed for the 5th and the 14th Jinas, we are dealing here with a deliberate or fortuitous mistake» <sup>6</sup>.

2. SHIVARAMAMURTI, C., *Panorama of Jaina Art*, South India, fig. 129.

3. *Ibid.*, fig. 120. Also see, *Ibid.*, fig. 48A of Bāhubali from Melsittamur, South-Arcot distr., Tamil Nadu and fig. 87 of Bāhubali from Tirumalai.

4. *Ibid.*, fig. 182.

5. *Ibid.*, figs. 183-184.

6. KLAUS BRUHN, *op. cit.*, p. 198.

This image is not illustrated by Bruhn but since he has noted that the image is later than his figure 260 from Devgādh Temple no. 6, the sculpture with the bird cinha (cognizance) must be later in age than c. 9th-10th century A.D. By this time the cognizances for all the twenty-four Tirthaṅkaras were fixed both amongst the Śvetāmbaras and amongst the Digambara Jainas<sup>7</sup>. So this case cited by Bruhn is likely to be a mistake on the part of the sculptor and/or the donor.

That the cognizance in the case of Pārśvanātha was not settled for a long time seems to be possible. Firstly, because of the snake behind Pārśva and the snake-hoods over his head a separate cognizance on the pedestal was hardly necessary (compare Fig. 6 from Kambādhalli and Fig. 7 from Belgaum), for identification of images of Pārśva. This is already noted by Bruhn but still we do not know if that is the only reason for the discrepancy in the case of the cognizance of Pārśvanātha.

At Rajgir are found two such cases showing different cognizances of Pārśva. One such case is illustrated here as Figure 8. Here Pārśva sits in *padmāsana* and has a canopy of five snake-hoods. Below on the pedestal is the *dharmacakra* flanked by a conch on each side. When the cognizances were first introduced on pedestals of Tirthaṅkara images either in the late fourth century or in early fifth century A.D. a figure of the cognizance was shown on each side of the *dharmacakra*. Later on, perhaps after the eighth century and before the tenth century the *dharmacakra* is usually flanked by a deer on each side whereas the cognizance (*lāñchana*) of the Jina is either placed on top of the pedestal and below the lotus-seat of the Jina or its figures on the lower edge of the pedestal<sup>8</sup>. The motif of *dharmacakra* with two deer uniformly used for all Tirthaṅkaras seems to be an imitation of the Buddhist motif where it has a special significance suggesting Buddha's first sermon in the Deer-Park near Sarnath<sup>9</sup>.

7. For more information on cognizances, see, SHAH, U.P., *Jaina-Rūpamaṇḍana*, Vol. I (Delhi, 1987), pp. 83-86, Figs. 26, 27, 34; pp. 152-53, Fig. 35.

8. Especially, see, *Akota Bronzes*, fig. 41b of Ajitanātha, c. middle of eighth century A.D., where the elephant cognizance is shown on each side of the *dharmacakra* which is on the lower end of the pedestal. In the Caumakha sculpture which was in the Son Bhandara cave and which can be dated in c. 7th or 8th century, the practice of the cognizance flanking the *dharmacakra* is continued, see, *Studies In Jaina Art*, fig. 28.

9. Also see, *Jaina-Rūpa-Maṇḍana*, Vol. I, pp. 9, 103-4; pp. 84-86.

The sculpture of Pārśvanātha illustrated in Figure 8 seems to date from c. 6th or 7th century A.D., roughly around 600 A.D. There is a canopy of only five snake-hoods over the head of this Jina-figure. He might be Supārśvanātha, but since at Aihole and Badami we have Pārśva with 5 snake-hoods, and since this Rājgir image is about the same age, it is also not unlikely that the Rājgir sculpture (Fig. 8) represented Pārśvanātha. There is a bigger post-Gupta sculpture at Rājgir (Figure 9) where the Jina sitting in *padmāsana* has seven snake-hoods overhead. On the pedestal the *dharmacakra* in the centre is mutilated but on its side is the figure of an elephant as the cognizance. Along with the *dharmacakra* the elephant on its right side is mutilated. The seven snake-hoods and the coils of snake behind the body of the Jina clearly suggest that the Jina represented here is Pārśvanātha.

At Mathura, all the Jina figures with snake-hoods overhead are identified as representing Pārśvanātha. So far as we know, no Jina figure or head of Jina with a canopy of five snake-hoods, dating from the Kuṣāṇa or Gupta period, is yet discovered. The general tradition amongst the Jainas, especially in the mediaeval period, is to represent Pārśva with a canopy of three, or seven or eleven snake-hoods, and Supārśvanātha is represented with either one or five or nine snake-hoods overhead<sup>10</sup>, as noted by Hemacandrācārya in his *Triṣaṣṭiśalākāpuruṣacarita*. But in Fig. 10 from Aihole and Fig. 11 from Badami both of which are representations of the attack on Pārśva by Kamaṭha the standing Jina has over his head a canopy of five snake-hoods of Dharaṇendra. Hemacandra in his life of Pārśvanātha given in the *Triṣaṣṭiśalākāpuruṣacarita* clearly says that Dharaṇendra held over Pārśvanātha (during Kamaṭha's attack of torrential rains, stones etc.) his seven-hoods as an umbrella. The author of *Padmānanda-Mahākāvya* also says that Supārśvanātha has one or five or nine snake-hoods overhead while Pārśvanātha has three or seven or eleven snake-hoods as a canopy overhead. We have seen that this tradition is not known to the Jainas of Aihole and Badami. Since at Mathura we have all images with only seven hoods and at Aihole and Badami with

10. See *Triṣaṣṭiśalākāpuruṣacarita* by Hemacandra, III.5.30, 48, 79-80, and *Saptatiṣṭa-sthānaka-prakarāṇa* of Somatilaka Śūri (V.S. 1387=1350 A.D.), 123.

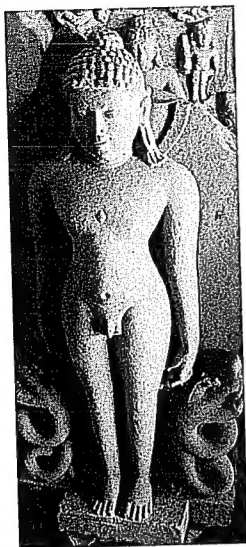


Fig. 1: Pārśva (?), Devgaḍh Temple 6  
(Copyright and courtesy Prof. Klaus Bruhn,  
Berlin).

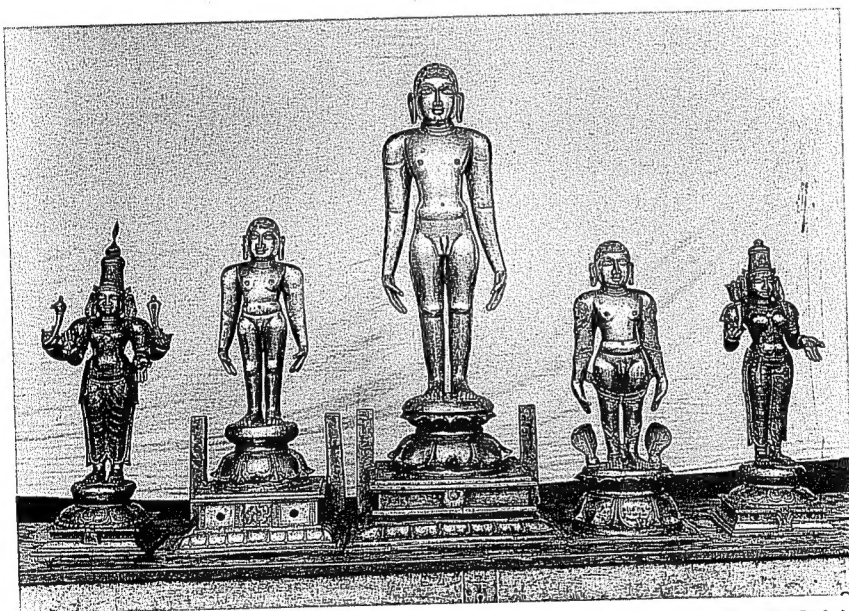


Fig. 2: Bronze figures in a Jain temple at Venkundram (North Arcot, Tamil Nadu).  
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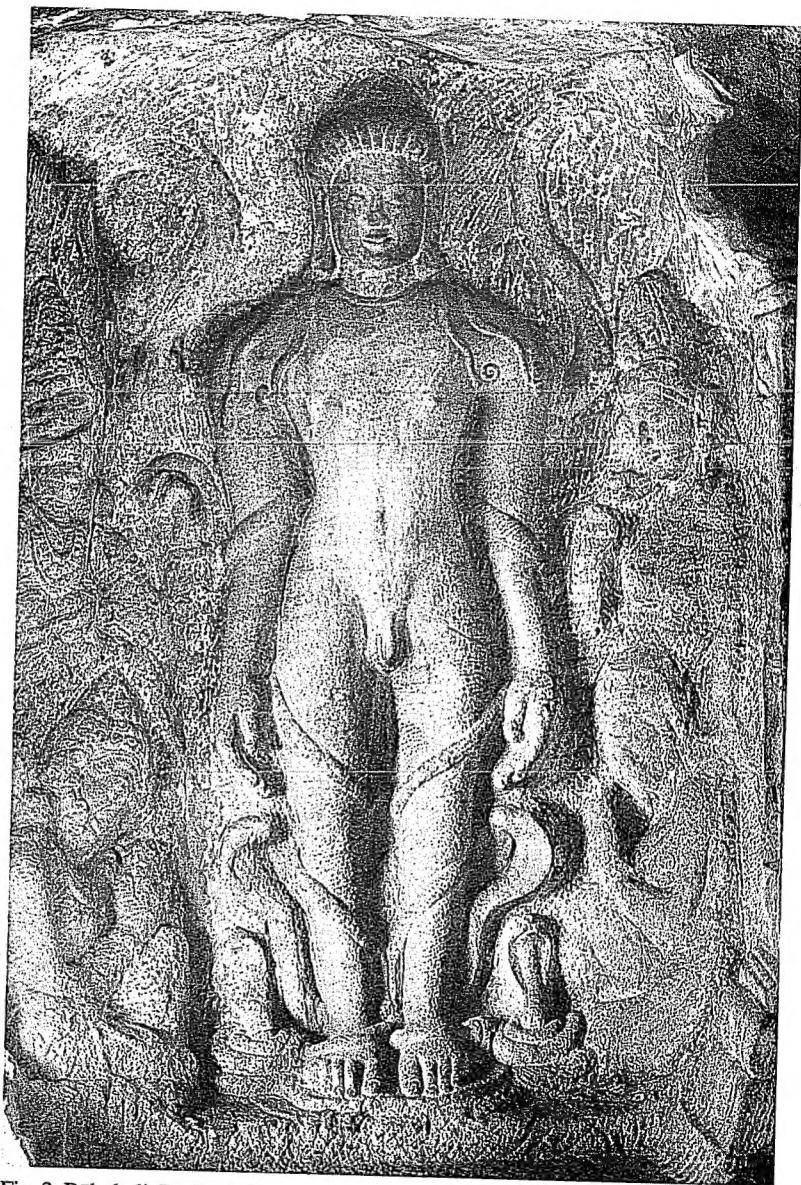


Fig. 3: Bāhubali, Badāmi, Cave no.4 (Jaina cave). Copyright Archaeological Survey of India.



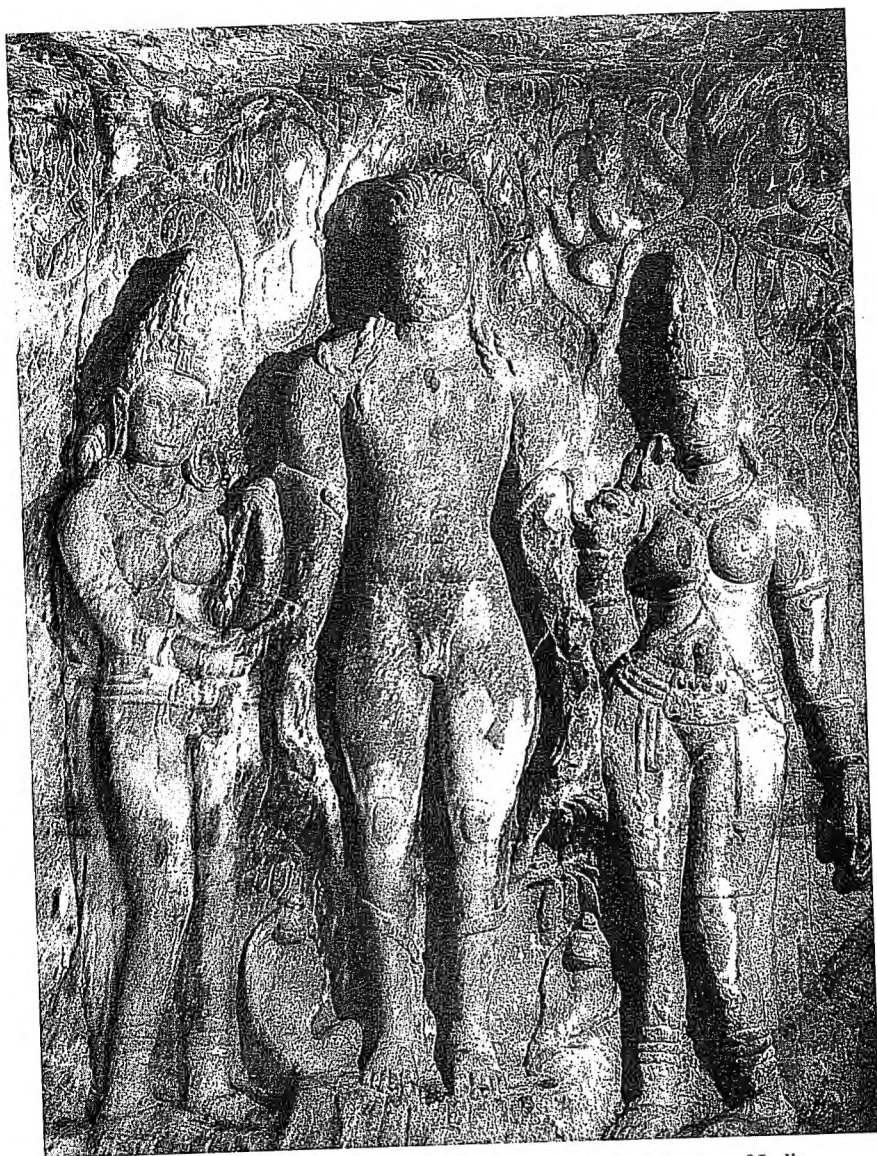


Fig. 4: Bāhubali, Aihole, Jaina cave. Copyright Archaeological Survey of India.



Fig. 5: Rock-cut figure of Bāhubali, Ratnagiri (Anantapur district).  
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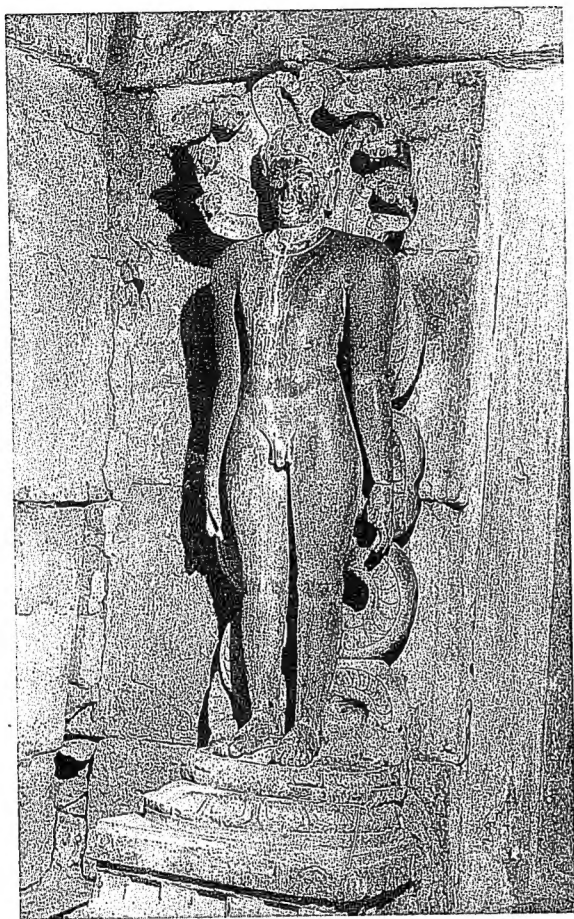


Fig. 6: Pārśvanātha, from Pañcakūṭa Basti, Kambadhāl (Karnataka). Copyright Archaeological Survey of India.

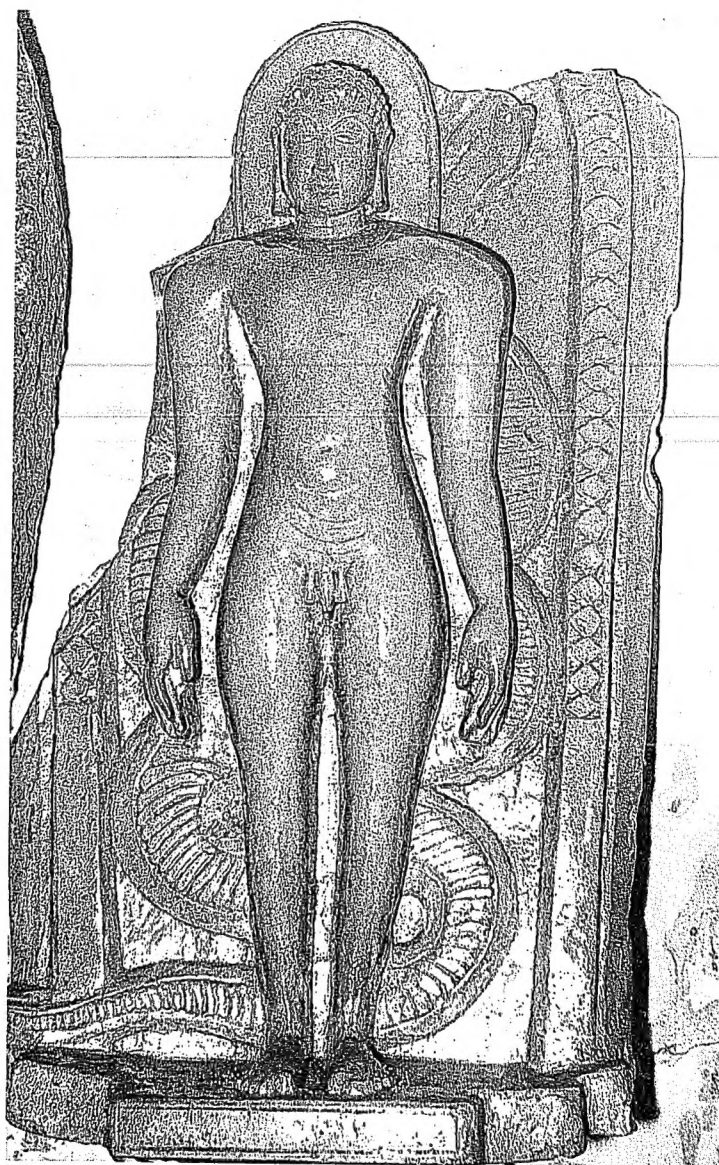


Fig. 7: Pārśvanātha standing, Chikka Basadi, Belgaum. Courtesy, late Prof. Gururaja Bhatt.



Fig. 8: Seated image of Pārśvanātha, Rajgir. Copyright: Indian Museum, Calcutta.



Fig. 9: Seated Digambara Jain image in the Jain temple at Rajgir.  
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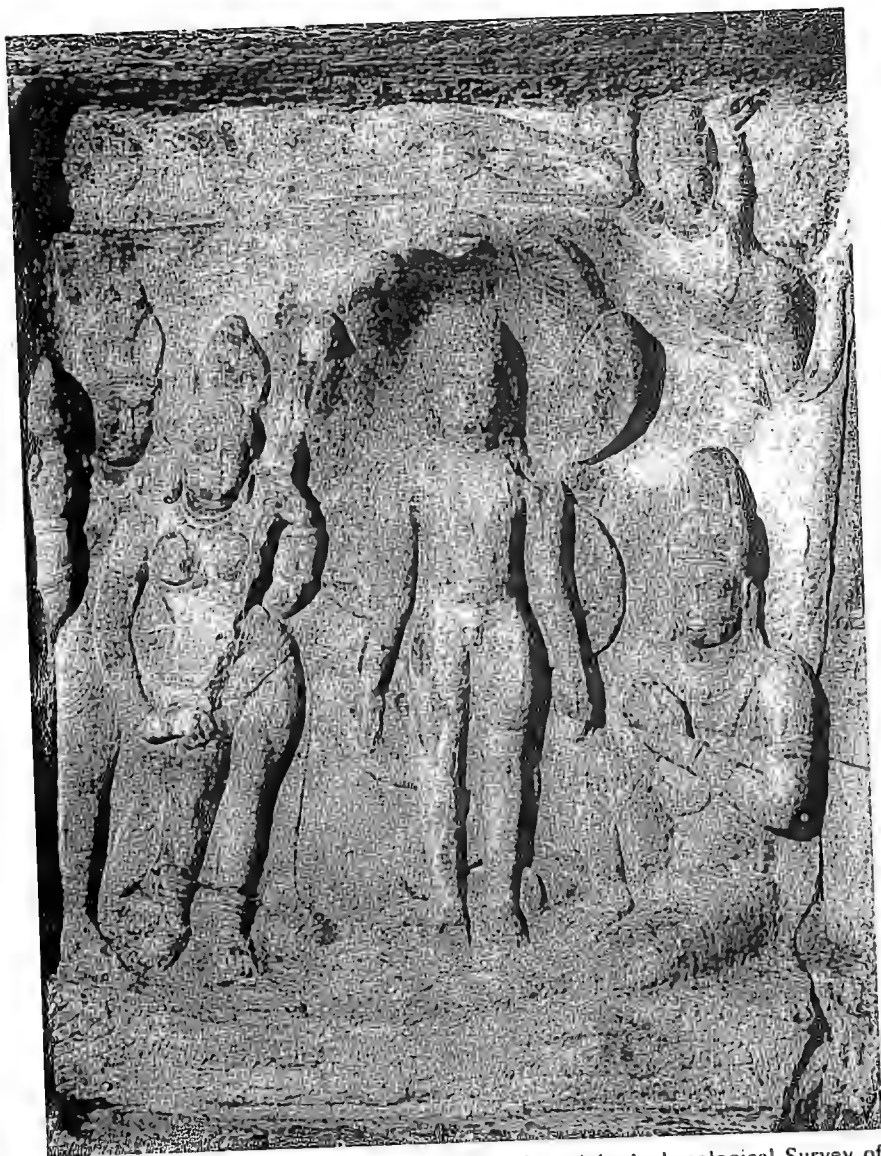


Fig. 10: Standing images, Jain cave, Aihole. Copyright Archaeological Survey of India.

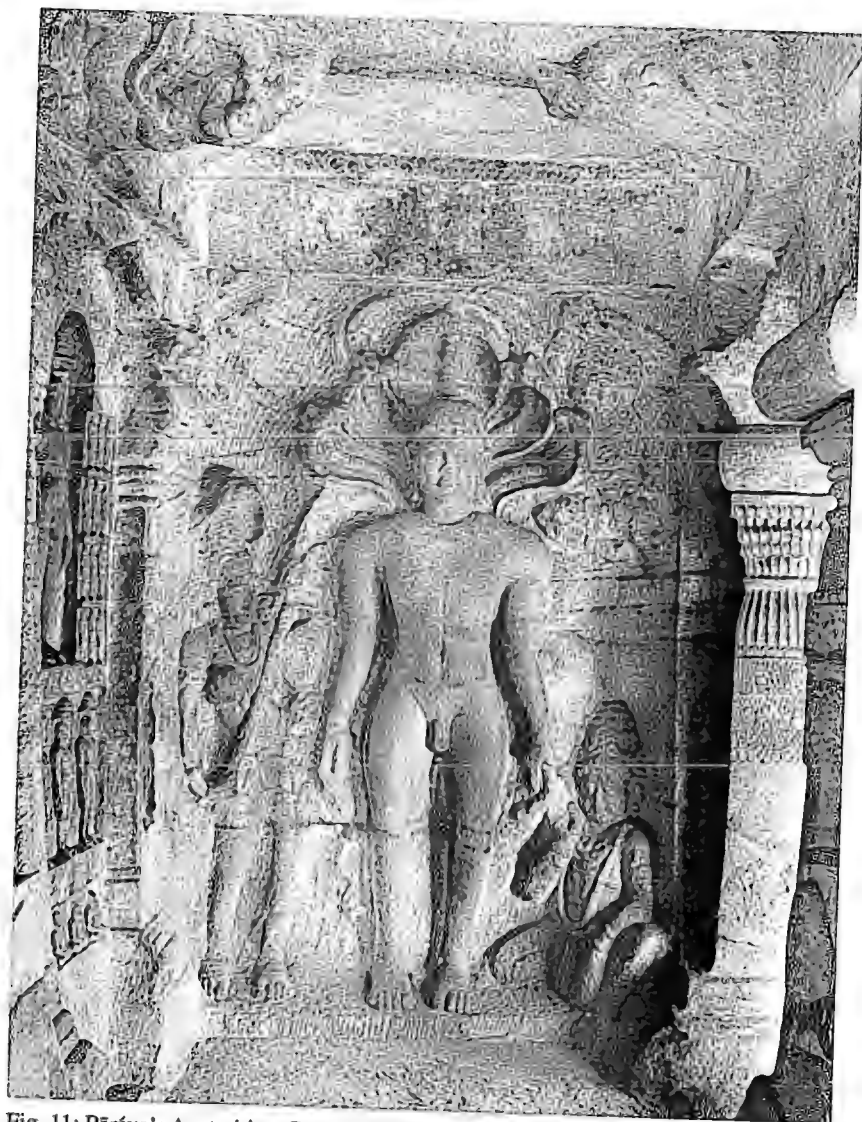


Fig. 11: Pārśva's Austerities, Cave no.4, Bādāmi. Courtesy and Copyright Prof. Grittli Mitterwallner.



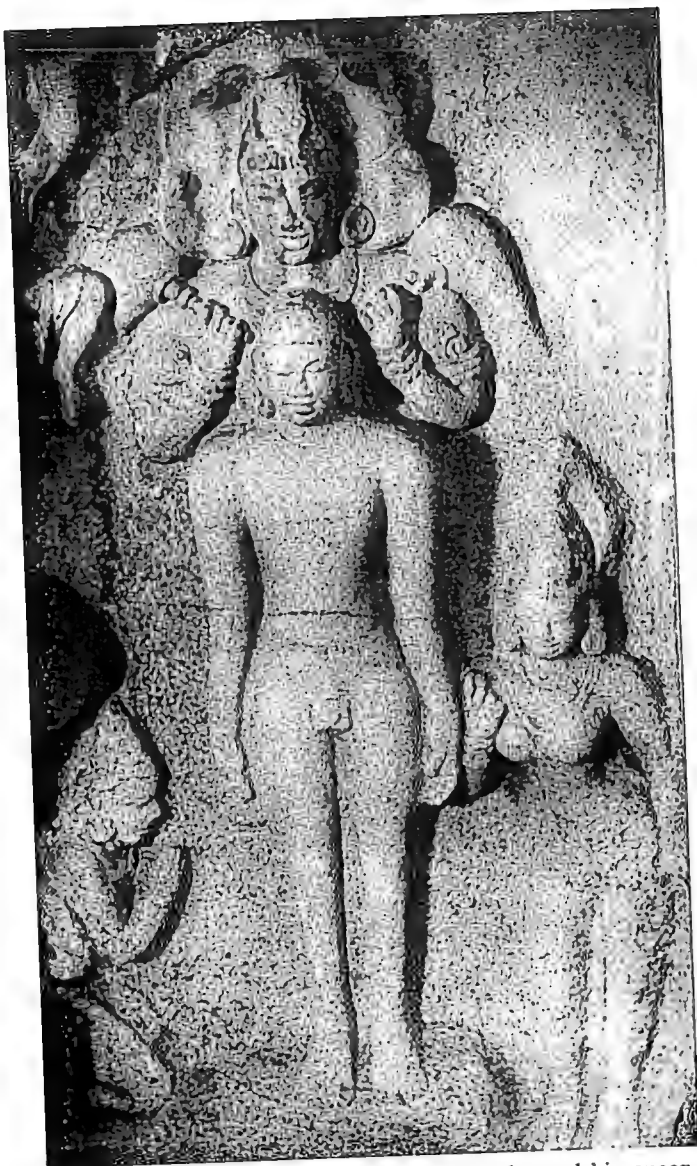


Fig. 12: Pārsvanātha protected by Dharmendra and his queen, Kalugumalai (9th century A.D.). Copyright Archaeological Survey of India.

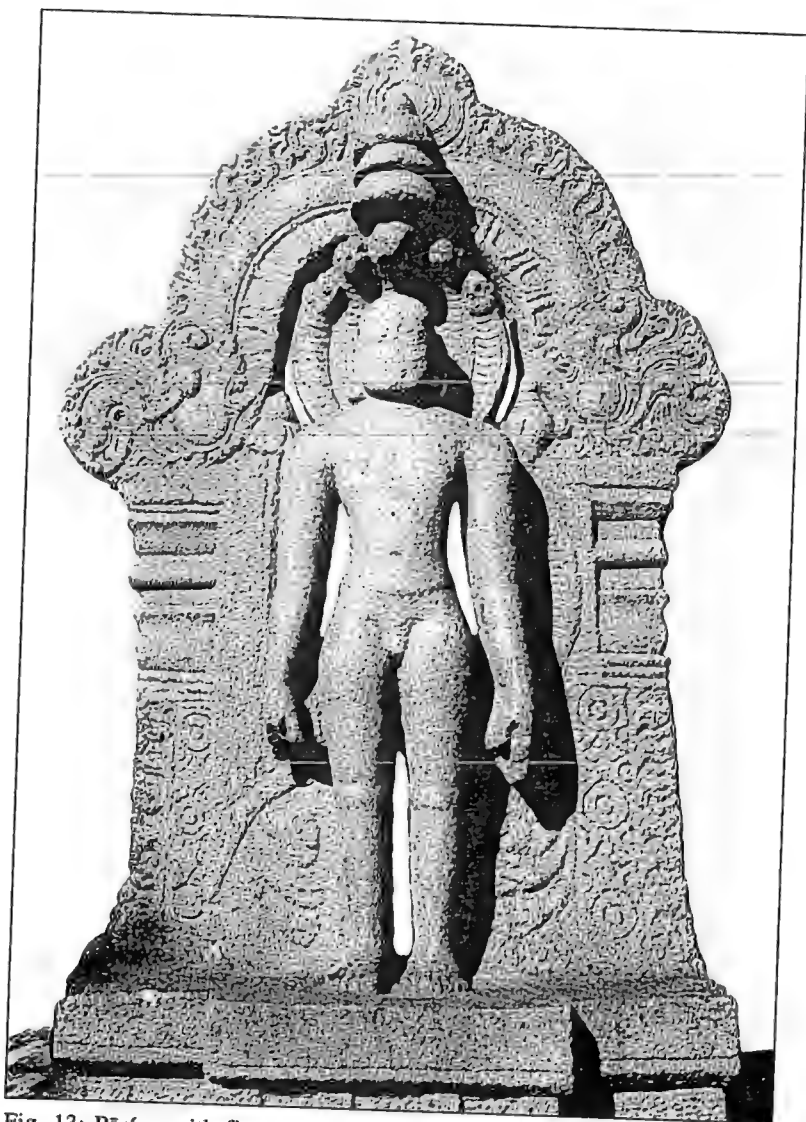


Fig. 13: Pārśva with five snake-hoods and Padma- and Śaṅkha-nidhi near shoulders, from Chandragiri, Chittor district. Copyright Archaeological Survey of India.



Fig. 14: Standing Pārśvanātha, from Stavanidhi, Chikkodi taluq. (Belgaum district).



Fig. 15: Stone image of Pārśvanātha, Bellur Jaina temple. (Originally from Nāgamaṅgalam?). Gaṅga (ca. 10th century A.D.).



Fig. 16: Pārśvanātha from Katali (Chanda District). Nagpur Museum. Copyright Archaeological Survey of India.

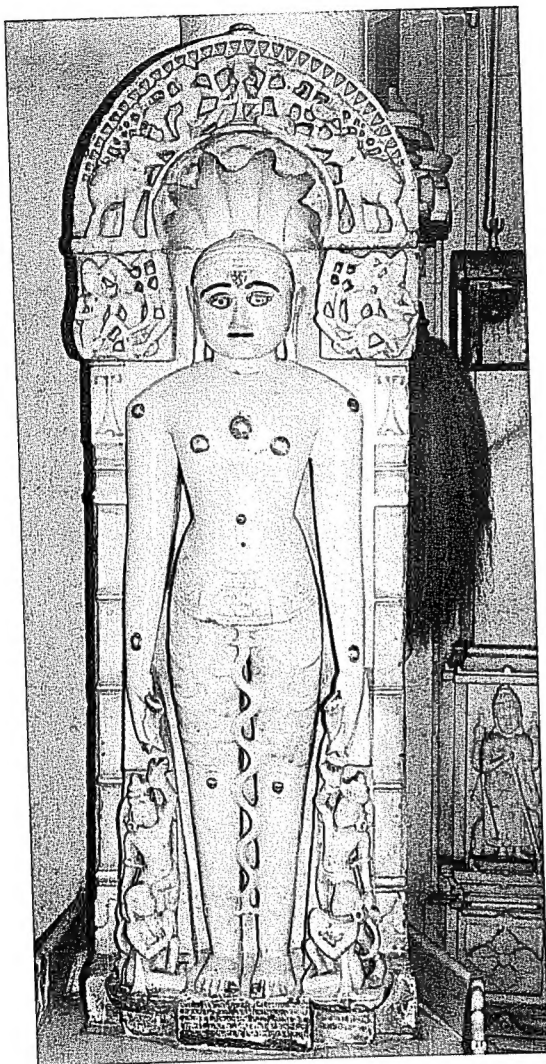


Fig. 17: Standing Jina, inscr.dated V.S. 1240, from Paladi, near Sirohi (Rajasthan).

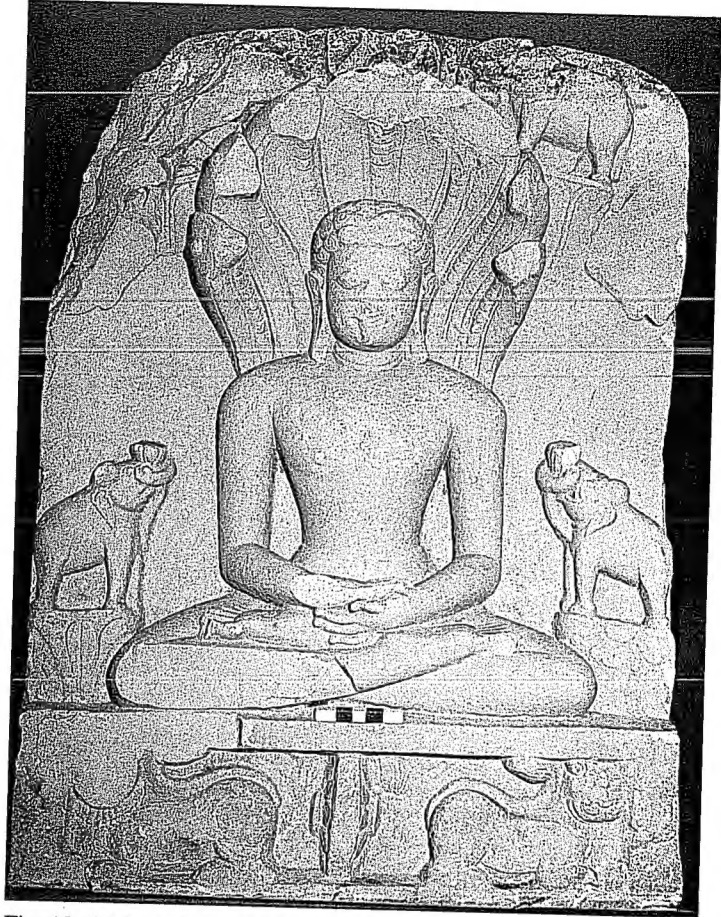


Fig. 18: Pārśvanātha seated in *padmāsana* (ca. 7th century A.D.), from Tumain (Guna district, Madhya Pradesh). Copyright Dept. of Archaeology, Madhya Pradesh.



five hoods we must acknowledge both these as ancient traditions. With Klaus Bruhn I also feel that where the Jina has coils of a snake at his back the Jina is to be identified as Pārśvanātha, irrespective of the number of snake-hoods held over his head. Thus figure 13 from Candragiri, Chittoor district, has to be worshipped as Pārśvanātha. Here the cobra behind him holds a canopy of five-snake-hoods. This method obtains confirmation from figure 14 of standing Pārśvanātha from Stavanidhi, Chikkodi taluq, Belgaum district. Here the identification of Pārśvanātha is further confirmed by the presence of his Yakṣa and Yakṣī sitting near the Jina's legs. Thus the beautiful figure of the Jina from Nagamangalam, now in the Bellur village near Kambaḍhalli, Karnataka, is identified as Pārśvanātha (Figure 15) with snake coils behind the body and a canopy of five snake-hoods overhead. Sculpture no. B. 32 in Nagpur Museum, originally from Katali in Chanda district (Fig. 16) hitherto identified as Suārśvanātha, should be taken to represent the Jina Pārśvanātha, with five snake-hoods overhead and coils of Dharaṇendra's body at his back.

However, a marble sculpture of a standing Jina from the village Paladi near Sirohi, Rajasthan, shows a canopy of five cobra-heads and no snake-coils behind the back of the Jina. The pedestal of the sculpture has an inscription dated V.S. 1240 stating that the Jina installed is Supārśvanātha (Figure 17) <sup>11</sup>.

Figure 18 illustrates a beautiful sculpture of Pārśvanātha sitting in *padmāsana* and having a canopy of seven snake-hoods overhead. The upper right hand corner of the sculpture is damaged but the left hand upper corner shows a small figure of an elephant just above the snake-hoods. The pedestal is a *śimhāsana* with the *dharmacakra* in the centre. The beautifully modelled figure dates from c. seventh century A.D. and retains the charm of classical art. The sculpture hails from Tumain in Guna district, M.P. This sculpture is a rare type since it represents on each side of Pārśvanātha an elephant standing on lotuses and worshipping the Jina with a lotus with a long stalk held in the trunk. The elephants in the corners at the top perhaps carried *kalaśas* in their trunks for *abhiṣeka* or lustration of the Jina. But this is a guess only since we rarely find sculptures showing *abhiṣeka* of a Jina. In

11. See *Triṣaṣṭi.*, parva IX.3.249-81.

our case since the elephants have no riders with drums or flowers etc. it is possible that the elephants on the top corners carried either *kalaśas* or lotuses with long stalks <sup>12</sup>.

The sculpture of standing Pārśvanātha from Chandragiri, Chittor district, illustrated in Fig. 13, is unique from another point of view. Near the right shoulder of the Jina is a lotus and near the left shoulder is a conch. These seem to signify the *padma-nidhi* and the *śaṅkha-nidhi*. The sculpture is a fine specimen of Chola art of c. 1000 A.D. Sivaramamurti has illustrated in his *Panorama of Jaina Art* fig. 13, a beautiful sculpture which he has described as a «Tīrthaṅkara standing flanked by *Padmanidhi* and *Śaṅkhanidhi*, Chola, 10th century A.D., National Museum, New Delhi». He further writes: «*This is a very interesting feature which does not occur very frequently except in South India*» (*Ibid.*, p. 20). The photograph clearly shows a third symbol – a *cakra* – near the left foot of the Jina who has a canopy of five snake-hoods and coils of the snake behind his body. He should therefore be identified as Pārśvanātha. Since now we have the *padma*, the *śaṅkha* and the *cakra* by the sides of this Jina, instead of taking them as *nidhis* (since there is no *cakra-nidhi*) I am inclined to take this as an attempt to identify the Jina with Viṣṇu who carries this symbol in his hands. We know that, in the eighth century, Jinasena in his *Adipurāṇa* addressed Rṣabhanātha as *Aghora*, *Īśāna*, *Tatpuruṣa* and *Vāmadeva* thus suggesting that Rṣabha is also verily like Śiva. Here perhaps Pārśva was equated or identified with Viṣṇu in the Chola period. Such mutual influences and borrowings amongst sects staying together is not unnatural, rather the process is unavoidable <sup>13</sup>.

12. *Padmānanda-Mahākāvya*, 1.10, and 1.26.

13. The problem of such borrowings is discussed by me in my forthcoming paper entitled "Borrowings in Jaina Iconography – Some Remarks", being published in *Dr. K.V. Sounder Rajān Felicitation Volume*.

For iconography of Pārśvanātha-images and various other sculptures of this Jina, see, *Jaina-Rūpamaṇḍana*, Vol. I, pp. 170-187 and plates; and KLAUS BRUHN, *op. cit.*, pp. 198-199.